



SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT

Date Written	17 th March 2021
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Service Area	Community Regeneration
Committee Date	13 th April 2021

To: Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen

Cyfarthfa Heritage Area

1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 A significant amount of investment and development has gone into Cyfarthfa Heritage Area over the past 10 years.
- 1.2 In order to progress the strands of the Crucible Report, the next stage was to procure a first class multi-disciplinary team to develop a 'Strategic Framework' for the 'Big Idea' for Cyfarthfa Heritage Area.
- 1.3 World-renowned Architects, Ian Ritchie Architects were awarded the contract.
- 1.4 The Cyfarthfa Plan was adopted by Full Council on the 4th November 2020 and the Plan was formally launched on the 12th January 2021, followed by coverage in both local and national press.
- 1.5 In September 2020, a report was taken to Council recommending the new SPV would be named 'The Cyfarthfa Foundation', that the Memorandum and Articles of Association be approved, that a bank account is opened with £5k deposited from the Council and the first directors be appointed. This was unanimously approved.
- 1.6 On 29th August 2019, MTCBC secured £700k from the VRP Programme for the re-development of the Canolfan and external play provision facilities.
- 1.7 In February 2021, MTCBC secured an additional £297,547.33 and received an extension until June 2021 to finalise all spend. The additional cost was secured for professional fees and external works including the re-surfacing of the play area and splash pad.

1.8 In March 2021, The Cyfarthfa Foundation secured £1.2m from Welsh Government for development funding towards the implementation of The Cyfarthfa Plan. The funding will allow The Cyfarthfa Foundation to appoint staff and undertake necessary survey work to develop key projects for delivery.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

2.1 That Scrutiny note the comments of the report.

2.2 That Scrutiny discuss and comment on the information identified within the report.

2.3 That Scrutiny identifies any further information they would like to receive as part of the forward reporting for Cyfarthfa Heritage Area.

3.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

3.1 A significant amount of investment and development has gone into Cyfarthfa Heritage Area over the past 10 years. There has been investment primarily in the Park through the Heads of the Valleys Programme and a £3.3m Parks for People (P4P) Programme was delivered between 2011 and 2016.

3.2 On 21st October 2017 at Cyfarthfa Castle, Merthyr Tydfil, the Design Commission for Wales and the Welsh School of Architecture at Cardiff University convened a multi-disciplinary team to scope the possibilities within the town and surrounding landscape in a bold visioning exercise that sought ways of making of Merthyr's heritage assets something greater than the sum of its parts, underlining its true international significance.

3.3 This one-day charrette was supported by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC), Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Trust (MTLT) and Merthyr Heritage Trust and made possible with funding from MTCBC and support from Design Circle RSAW South. The event brought together over 60 creative minds – architects, landscape architects, planners, heritage specialists and artists – to examine and appraise the potential around Cyfarthfa, the wider town and landscape so as to shape a vision for the future.

3.4 The charrette – an intense day of ideas generation – considered how Cyfarthfa Castle, its extended landscape and built heritage might become an international quality visitor destination and experience, better promoting its already palpable sense of place. It considered new ways in which these central assets could be connected to other assets throughout the town and beyond to catalyse regeneration and tourism, maximise impact and return real public benefit.

3.5 The findings of the report highlighted four strategically integrated strands:

- a) A cathedral for our industrial heritage
- b) Weaving a connected landscape
- c) Beyond Cyfarthfa – Beyond Merthyr
- d) A year-round framework for events

- 3.6 The charrette report recommended the pursuit of these strands and outlined the necessary resources, timescales and mechanisms required for them to realise their full potential.
- 3.7 It was highlighted that the delivery of the vision outlined within the charrette report will require human and financial resources beyond those of the local authority itself. The full implementation of all elements envisaged will need to be fully costed but may be in the order of £50m, possibly spread over a decade. The realisation of the full vision will require an innovative approach to procurement and delivery and the enthusiastic commitment of MTCBC, MTLT and the Welsh Government (WG), as well as other community organisations, stakeholders and funders.
- 3.8 The charrette day demonstrated beyond doubt that Merthyr has resources of powerful loyalty to the place and pride in its history. The presiding impulse from all participants was to raise the town's projection to the world today to a position truly commensurate with its international importance in our industrial, social and political history.
- 3.9 On 6th June 2018, the Regeneration Team along with advisors and the Chief Executive of the Design Commission for Wales (DCFW) presented a report to Full Council on the charrette findings and the following recommendations were approved:
- To establish a small working group to progress the 'Crucible' concept and projects.
 - To establish a task and finish group to undertake discussions as part of an internal design charrette.
 - To establish an interim working group to explore the establishment of an appropriate development vehicle to take the programme forward.
 - To identify a potential location for a new development vehicle to be based
 - To undertake community consultation and identify engagement with key stakeholders.
 - To review existing HLF applications for Cyfarthfa.
 - To explore the establishment of links with major London based Charities and Trusts
- 3.10 Discussions were held with Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) following the meeting in order to share the ambition for the Cyfarthfa Heritage Area and to discuss the progress of the Cyfarthfa Castle application. The deadline for submission was extended until March 2019.
- 3.11 During this period of consideration of future plans and designs for the Castle Purcell, the multi-disciplinary design team appointed for the re-development of the Castle were temporarily put on hold until a progression route was confirmed and agreed.
- 3.12 The Parks for People 2 (P4P2) application was due to be submitted on the 3rd September 2018. It was identified that the elements included within the Stage 2 application would not affect the overall vision of the Charrette Report in creating a transformational change. It was envisaged that the elements to be delivered would contribute towards the continued improvement of the Park and would support MTLT in becoming more sustainable and creating better improved income generating facilities.

4.0 WHERE WE WERE

Crucible Report

- 4.1 In order to progress the strands of the Crucible Report, the next stage was to procure a first class multi-disciplinary team to develop a 'Strategic Framework' for the 'Big Idea' for Cyfarthfa Heritage Area. The framework would drive future design and development work for the development of the heritage assets and wider Heritage Area. This framework would also lead to multiple sub-projects based on the themes contained in the brief and the charrette report.
- 4.2 A brief was developed and put out to tender. A total of 20 tenders were received. This was reduced to 15 following the selection stage evaluation. The remaining 15 tenderers' quality bids were evaluated by the evaluation team, 8 tenderers did not pass the quality threshold that was stipulated in the ITT. 7 tenderers progressed to interview stage. The interviews were held on the 18th and 20th June and world-renowned Architects, Ian Ritchie Architects were awarded the contract.
- 4.3 The Teams approach was to work with the people of Merthyr Tydfil to deliver a comprehensive study which would excite, motivate and help deliver the transformation of the Cyfarthfa Heritage Area over the next 20 years.

Castle

- 4.4 Based on the content of the charrette report in relation to the Castle that a distinctive building is needed, it was recognised by the DCFW and the Council that it would be beneficial for a review of the Castle designs to be undertaken in order to ensure that the vision for the building complemented the wider vision of the charrette report in creating transformational change in one of Merthyr's key heritage assets and its only Grade 1 Listed building.
- 4.5 This resulted in the decision to suspend the HLF application to ensure that the best and most appropriate design is created for any future developments in line with the Big Idea. A discussion was held with HLF to discuss the rationale behind the decision, and this was well received given the wider opportunity that the charrette presented. HLF recognised that an application for the former school site based on the proposals outlined in the Stage 1 HLF application, could be at the detriment to the wider development. An application submission at this point of masterplanning, would result in not only a fragmented development, but would also restrict future opportunities particularly for the Museum.
- 4.6 To support the commissioning of the wider masterplan for the Cyfarthfa Heritage Area and the suspension of the HLF application, this also resulted in the termination of the contract that MTCBC had with Purcell (the appointed disciplinary Team for the re-development of the Castle), due to the potential significant change in overall scope that was outside of the basis of their appointment.

Cyfarthfa Park

- 4.7 Based on the content of the charrette report relating to the Park, it was agreed with HLF that the P4P2 application would be submitted in August 2019 to ensure key

linkages with the Crucible Report and ensuring all projects were complementary to future aspirations and would not be abortive in future years.

- 4.8 The P4P2 application had a focus on capital schemes including access improvements in and around the Park, extension to the play provision and the upgrading of key heritage assets. Volunteering also formed a crucial part of the application to ensure that Cyfarthfa Park is better managed, understood, shared and looked after resulting in volunteers having the opportunity to develop skills in heritage, conservation, horticulture, project management and volunteer co-ordination.
- 4.9 In November 2019, HLF confirmed that the application had been unsuccessful. This was due to further development being required in terms of the 'social' element of the application in understanding the park users and opportunities and also, in light of the Crucible Report to understand what further opportunities would arise from the final report to enhance the Park and help identify any additional capital schemes for delivery in future years.

Valleys Regional Park

- 410 In November 2018, WG announced that six Valleys parks and heritage sites were the first to be named as Discovery Gateways, set to share in £7m of investment as part of work to create a Valleys Regional Park (VRP) and make the most of the area's rich natural and cultural heritage.
- 4.11 WG announced that the VRP is at the heart of their ambition to help Valleys communities maximise heritage to deliver real social, economic and environmental benefits stating "Our Valleys contain some fantastic natural landscapes and cultural treasures. This Valleys Regional Park will kick-start work to raise their profile internationally, while better connecting them to our towns and villages and encouraging more active lifestyles."
- 4.12 In November 2018, MTCBC submitted an expression of interest to WG for funding. The overall proposal was to deliver a capital programme which would enhance the key heritage features within the park and wider heritage area including better interpretation, improved access and navigation and create links to the industrial heritage hinterland. The programme of activities would enable MTCBC and MTLT to engage with more, and a wider range of people, to take an active part in making decisions about our heritage as well as further develop their understanding of the area.
- 4.13 The expression of interest was approved by WG and in March 2019, a full application request was issued for completion and submission in May 2019. On 10th May 2019, a full application was submitted to WG outlining the request for funding.
- 4.14 The application requested funding for the re-development of the Canolfan inclusive of works to adjacent area (play provision facilities). Due to the usage of the park and the aspiration to increase visitor numbers, the need to develop a better catering offer was recognised by MTCBC and MTLT. The aim of the project was to see the interior of the building remodelled as a café with full kitchen, food preparation, storage, counter and seating areas that serve all audiences across the site at Cyfarthfa.

- 4.15 It was envisaged that the existing security office would remain and continue to be used as a base for site security, and the general management of the playground area, imperative to the operation of the Canolfan and the income generated on site. Developments at the playground were also identified as a key requirement which included the opportunity to create a new toilet and changing provision adjacent to the splash pad. This was identified as a priority not only for the peak season in the summer but to accommodate families and visitors that attend the high-profile events held in the Park all year round.
- 4.16 The proposal through the VRP application was to not only deliver capital developments but deliver an activities and events programme building on the foundation economy that already exists within the Park. This would enhance the activities led by the park user groups such as the anglers, model railway, tearooms, greenhouses and bowls club and can help to attract new opportunities into the park for example through sports development and the Merthyr Tydfil and District Naturalists. The focus would be on communication, health and well-being, training and skills development and the overall development of the social enterprise and private enterprise sector within the Heritage Area.

Cyfarthfa Furnaces

- 4.17 Following the surveys undertaken on the Cyfarthfa Furnaces in 2016 / 17 a laser survey was commissioned for the scheduled ancient monument which would provide a report and a scale photo showing the structure stone for stone. This is of particular importance should there be any localised collapses.
- 4.18 It was proposed that once the laser survey was completed, a full detailed structural survey would be commissioned including costs for the preservation of the structure, enabling the Council to develop and submit applications to identified funders in future years.

Leisure Trust

- 4.19 On 7th November 2018, Council unanimously voted to undertake a due diligence / legal process to review taking back management of all heritage assets that Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Trust have the responsibility for managing currently, including Cyfarthfa Park and Castle, with the aim of completing the transfer (subject to due diligence) by the end of 2019.

5.0 WHERE WE ARE NOW

- 5.1 The Masterplan commission was for a 12-month period with the final Masterplan completed and issued to MTCBC in September 2020.
- 5.2 The final plan was a result of extensive consultation and involvement with the public and key stakeholders in Merthyr Tydfil. This led to the creation of three strategic themes – History and Heritage, Natural Environment and Contemporary Creativity – that have been translated into more than 70 projects.

5.3 The Cyfarthfa Plan has been split into four phases across two decades:

- The first ten years – 2020-2031 will include:

Phase 1: the Castle Projects

Phase 2: the Iron Way Projects

- The next ten years – 2031-2040 will include:

Phase 3: the Creative Arts Projects

Phase 4: Tertiary Education Projects

- The 100ha park weaves throughout all phases of the Plan.

5.4 The Cyfarthfa Plan was adopted by Full Council on the 4th November 2020 and the Plan was formally launched on the 12th January 2021, followed by coverage in both local and national press.

Special Purpose Vehicle

5.5 In 2019, a decision was made corporately not to bring the assets back into Council ownership. Subsequent reports would be presented to Council regarding MTLT and the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV).

5.6 In September 2020, a report was taken to Council recommending the new SPV would be named 'The Cyfarthfa Foundation', that the Memorandum and Articles of Association be approved, that a bank account is opened with £5k deposited from the Council and the first directors be appointed. This was unanimously approved.

5.7 The report identified that the creation of an autonomous charity / company is the only practical way in which to assemble the necessary funding – from governmental, national lottery, business, and charitable sources. Demonstrating the independence and autonomy of the SPV will be critical to achieving this investment. It also identified that The Foundation will establish an organisation whose sole focus will be the development of Cyfarthfa and to consider other heritage assets in the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil (but particularly within the footprint of the Crucible project) to maximise the benefits for the borough – economic, education and social – and the nation.

5.8 The report also highlighted that this project cannot be delivered by MTLT due its specialist nature. The Trust has many differing responsibilities centred on the community. This project requires a sole focus and the retention of high-level expertise, some of its specialist, at board and staff level, drawn from Wales, the UK and beyond.

5.9 A Cyfarthfa Working Group has been established between MTCBC, The Cyfarthfa Foundation and MTLT to discuss progress on development and delivery of The Cyfarthfa Plan. The Working Group meets on a six-weekly basis.

- 5.10 In June 2020, MTCBC secured £80k towards the delivery of an Archive Project. The Purpose of the Funding was to create the necessary foundation of knowledge on which to base the development of a visitor attraction of international quality at Cyfarthfa.
- 5.11 The Cyfarthfa Working Group, in conjunction with MTLT, would carry out a study of all relevant archives to assess what contribution information and materials held in them could make to the proposed visitor attraction. Sources included Glamorgan Archives, local libraries, Cyfarthfa Museum, National Museum Wales and National Library of Wales.
- 5.12 In August 2020, Kevin Bolton Ltd. was appointed to undertake the review of the archives. Progress has been made to date, but the contract has been extended into 21 / 22 as restrictions in place due to Covid-19 has resulted in Kevin Bolton Ltd being unable to attend site to review the archives and the work has been done remotely. This has been agreed with WG.
- 5.13 In March 2021, The Cyfarthfa Foundation secured £1.2m from Welsh Government for development funding towards the implementation of The Cyfarthfa Plan. The funding will allow The Cyfarthfa Foundation to appoint staff and undertake necessary survey work to develop key projects for delivery. MTCBC will be the Grant Recipient Body for the funding and an Agreement will be issued to The Cyfarthfa Foundation in April 2021. MTCBC will have overall responsibility for reporting into Welsh Government and for monitoring spend by the Foundation.

Castle

- 5.14 Over the past six months MTLT has reported a number of issues identified within the Castle into MTCBC. Regeneration, Property Services and Engineering have attended numerous site visits and implemented a number of short-term mitigations to safeguard the Castle during the winter period. Works included minor roof repairs, cutting back of vegetation and clearance of drains and downpipes to prevent any further water ingress.
- 5.15 Following the site visits further issues have been identified including wet / dry rot and additional areas of water ingress. In order to understand the extent of the issues and the further works required within the building, MTCBC aim to commission a Condition Survey in April 2021 to ascertain the maintenance plan and future capital work requirements needed to preserve, protect and re-develop the building.
- 5.16 Three companies have been engaged with and taken to site to review and discuss the Grade I Listed Building with Property Services and Engineering. A brief will be developed in April 2021 and all three companies will have the opportunity to submit a quotation to bid for the survey work.
- 5.17 Any survey work undertaken in the past will be made available to the appointed consultants to help inform the Condition Survey including the Concrete Testing Report, which was recently undertaken.

5.18 MTCBC are also in discussions with MTLT regarding the re-location of the Museum and Art collection in order to protect and safeguard the collection over the short to medium term – until the building has been re-developed as proposed within The Cyfarthfa Plan. An options appraisal has been undertaken by the Trust and costs, timescales and evidence of need are currently being discussed.

Park / VRP Application

5.19 On 29th August 2019, MTCBC secured £700k from the VRP Programme for the re-development of the Canolfan and external play provision facilities. This was due to be spent by March 31st 2021.

5.20 In October 2020, Willis was appointed as the contractor to undertake the works. A 26 week programme was proposed with the contract due to end on the 9th May 2021.

5.21 In February 2021, MTCBC secured an additional £297,547.33 and received an extension until June 2021 to finalise all spend. The additional cost was secured for professional fees and external works including the re-surfacing of the play area and splash pad.

Furnaces

5.22 Mott MacDonald have been appointed by Engineers to prepare tender documentation for each of the following two options:

- Repair works to stabilise the furnace structure
- Full restoration of furnace structure in line with aspirations to convert the area into a tourist destination and in line with the aims of overall Cyfarthfa project and The Cyfarthfa Foundation.

5.23 As part of the commission, Mott MacDonald will also engage with CADW, provide a structural assessment, non-intrusive investigations and an initial heritage desk study.

5.24 Once this commission has been finalised, MTCBC will go out to tender for costs on both options identified above. The Cyfarthfa Foundation has commenced the fundraising strategy for the Cyfarthfa Furnaces.

6.0 WHERE WE WANT TO BE

6.1 To develop and deliver key projects identified within The Cyfarthfa Plan in conjunction with The Cyfarthfa Foundation.

6.2 To receive a detailed Condition Survey to inform the next steps in relation to capital works within Cyfarthfa Castle.

6.3 To successfully deliver the VRP Project by June 2021.

- 6.4 For MTCBC to understand the cost and capital work requirements to ensure the preservation of the Cyfarthfa Furnaces, again to ensure it is conserved and protected long term.
- 6.5 To secure funding for the preservation of the Cyfarthfa Furnaces.
- 6.6 To support The Cyfarthfa Foundation in appointing both Board Members and officers to deliver the outcomes identified within The Cyfarthfa Plan.

7.0 WHAT WE NEED TO DO NEXT

- 7.1 Identify the assets that The Cyfarthfa Foundation will manage and develop a programme outlining key milestones to meet this objective.
- 7.2 Appoint consultants to develop a Condition Survey for the Castle.
- 7.3 Issue tender documentation for the preservation of the Cyfarthfa Furnaces.
- 7.6 Continue to manage the MTLT contract.

8.0 CONTRIBUTION TO WELLBEING OBJECTIVES

- 8.1 The work being undertaken to support further development of the Cyfarthfa Heritage Area has been identified as one of the key projects supporting the delivery of the Working Life theme contained within the Merthyr Tydfil Corporate Wellbeing Plan. This project offers clear evidence to support how the Council is aiming to protect / enhance one of Merthyr’s key heritage and cultural assets, whilst in the longer term, the development of a Heritage Area-wide volunteering programme contributing towards one of the 5 ways of working. The volunteering programme will aim to be fully inclusive targeting a number of groups and the local community.

ALYN OWEN
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BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Title of Document(s)	Document(s) Date	Document Location
List the Background documents which have been relied on in preparing the report. E.g. previous minutes of relevant committees		
Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?		